



ORANGE COAST CHAPTER #5095

SAFETY ORIENTATION

Road Rules for New Chapter Members

OBJECTIVE:

To introduce you to the chapter's safe riding procedures and protocols, where safety, courtesy, common sense, and fun are the goals for all the Orange Coast Chapter group rides.

BEFORE THE RIDE:

You and your bike should be prepared prior to the start of any ride. Check the oil, tire pressure, brakes, lights, turn signals, horn, etc. before leaving your home. Have a "full tank and an empty bladder" before the ride begins. The ride always has a scheduled gas and bio stop, but the first stop may be as far as 60 to 100 miles away.

Never ride if you are under medication that may impair your skills, or after a late night event or party, as it will also reduce your response time to an incident.

Bring water, snacks, and proper clothing such as rain gear, night glasses, and additional sweatshirts for long rides or overnights.

THE RIDE MANAGEMENT TEAM:

Ride Leader – The ride leader will be identified as the person in charge of the ride.

Road Captains – Experienced riders who have successfully complete the apprentice Road Captain program are appointed by the chapter leadership to serve as a Road Captains and help chapter members get to our destination safely.

At least one and usually several Road Captains participate in any given ride and the Gold Braided Rope worn on their right shoulder identifies them.

If there is only one Road Captain on a ride, this person will be positioned at the back of the group and be referred to as the "Sweep" Road Captain. When multiple Road Captains participate in a ride, the Head Road Captain will insert them at key points in the line of bikes to ensure that the group will stay together, if separated by traffic or stop lights.

Always follow the directions of a Road Captain.

PRE-RIDE BRIEFING

The Ride Leader always gives a pre-ride briefing that will cover the ride, safety tips, and any hand signals that might be used on the ride. Road Captains and other key officers are also introduced.

Maps for the route are provided before the ride, however, each rider is responsible for downloading the map, and also for being able to navigate home, in the event they cannot complete the ride.

GROUP RIDING:

Staggered Formation- This is the standard riding formation. The Ride Leader is in the left most position in the lane, the second rider is in the right most position in the lane; the third rider follows the first, and so on. The recommended distance between bikes is two- seconds to the bike in front of you and one-second to the staggered bike on your right or left side. It is your responsibility to exercise good judgment, increasing the gap when riding at high speed or in twisties, and decreasing the gap when riding at slow speeds and in traffic. **ALWAYS GIVE YOURSELF ENOUGH ROOM TO STOP IN AN EMERGENCY!!**

If a rider on the left, or right, in front of you leaves the ride, you restore the staggered formation by crossing to the left, or right, to fill the open spot.

A rider who leaves the ride and later returns to the ride, rejoins the group at the end of the line and in front of the sweep Road Captain. At the next scheduled stop the rider can return to the same position taken at the start of the ride.

Single File- This formation is used when riding in narrow roads and twisties. Each rider has the entire road lane to execute a turn. The Ride Leader calls for single file by pointing up with the index finger and each rider is responsible for passing that message to the back of the line. (See hand signals).

RIDE CONSISTENCY:

Be consistent. Maintain a consistent two-second gap between you and the rider in front of you and one-second between you and the rider with whom you are staggered.

Make your speed changes gradual to minimize the rubber-band effect. We do NOT use cruise control or throttle locks within the group because it just does not work with consistency.

Use your rear view mirrors to regulate your consistency. You should be able to see the eyes of the staggered rider just in front of you in their mirror. If you cannot see them, they cannot see you. Back off or speed up until you can see them.

CHANGING LANES AND TURNS:

When the Ride Leader wants to change lanes, standard hand and turn signals will be used. Always perform your own head-check over your shoulder, and give your own signals, prior to your lane change.

When the Ride Leader wants to make a turn, the standard hand and turn signals will also be used. The group riders are expected to pass these signals back to the riders behind.

OBJECTS IN THE ROAD:

If you see a hazardous object in the road ahead, point it out to the riders following you by pointing towards the pavement (if possible in the direction of the object). If there is a bicyclist on the right shoulder, point that out with a left hand pointed to the right over the head. Always pass the warning signals back to those behind you.

When riding in a group, don't take for granted that the road ahead will always be clear. Objects have been known to fall off bikes.

PASSING:

Always pass traffic quickly and safely after your own head-check and proper hand and turn signals. Remember that there are riders behind you. When passing large trucks, always assume the truck driver does not see you. A good rule of thumb for when it is safe to move into a lane, is to be able to see the vehicle you want to move in front of in your rear view mirror. If you cannot, create a larger gap until you can, and then confirm with a head-check and make your move. Do not pass other riders in the group at any time as that causes confusion and is usually considered a rude act. Road Captains are the exceptions to this rule as they are there to help the Ride Leader manage the ride.

If the group splits for any reason, the Road Captain closest to where the line splits will move up and lead the group until it catches up with the front group.

TRAFFIC COURTESY:

Sooner or later autos or other vehicles will want to merge into our group to change lanes or exit the road. They usually do not stay there long so always let them in and out. A courteous wave of the hand will usually do the trick.

OTHER TIPS:

All chapter rides have a zero-tolerance for alcohol or drug use. If you drink or use drugs during any ride, a Road Captain or an officer on the ride will be asking you to leave ride. If on an overnighter, after the ride ends and the kick stand is down for the night, members can enjoy themselves for the night.

If you experience a bike breakdown or have a health concern during the ride, pull off the line and give a "thumbs-down" to the Road Captains. One or two Road Captains will pull off the ride and will stay with you until you are safe.

If on the other hand you need to pull off the ride for other non-critical reasons, like needing to dress up or down, need to make a gas or bio stop, etc, give the Road Captains a "thumbs-up" and they will know that you are O.K. You can catch up with the ride after you have taken care of your business.

PERSONAL COMFORT LEVEL:

The bottom line is your personal comfort level. Never ride or attempt to ride above your comfort level, that is when accidents happen. If during a ride you feel pressured or uncomfortable, pull out of the formation and join the Sweep Road Captain at the back of the line. The Sweep Road Captain will ride with you at your comfort level and will make sure that you arrive safely at the ride destination.

REMEMBER – WE ARE ALL HERE TO “RIDE AND HAVE FUN SAFELY”